12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

SOLIDARITY AND FISSION

THE TRIBE

Membership in the tribe was a social rather than a genetic matter. Children captured in war were fully incorporated into the society and are said to have remained loyal even in wars against the villages where they were born. The unity of the group was symbolized by absolute linguistic and cultural homogeneity, and the identity of its members was manifest in the possession of a clan name and the elaborate facial and body tatooing that until recent years was the hallmark of all Mundurucú.

The villages had independent subsistence economies, but for an occasional timbó fishing trip in which two communities might coöperate. But a number of villages usually participated in war expeditions and the major ceremonies. These occasions provided the opportunity for scattered clansmen to reunite and for people of diverse residence to coöperate in valued activity.

Warfare was of special importance in this regard, because it called for a high degree of organization and cooperation. When the initiative was taken by the men of one village to go on the warpath, the chief delegated a member of the *Muchacha anyen*, a society composed of particularly valiant and learned warriors, to visit other communities and extend invitations to take part in the hostilities. Only a part of the men of any one village accepted the invitations, and the rest remained behind to protect the women, children, and old people and to continue hunting and horticultural activities. Thus, intervillage coöperation allowed the Mundurucú to raise sizable war parties without imperiling the economies and defenses of the villages.

The structure of Mundurucú tribalism was given within the rules of descent and residence. The dispersal of pa-

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

602 628 619

trilineal clansmen through a matrilocal residence rule resulted in cross-cutting bonds of descent and residence that constituted the very web of intervillage relations. For example, a man who married a woman of another village and took up residence in the men's house there, has most complex allegiances. He observes a tie to his affinal relatives, and he is a member of a men's organization that includes fellow moiety members and perhaps some of his clan and phratry. But beyond the village, the man is linked to his parents and extended family, as well as to the men of his native community. Since his brothers might have become similarly scattered in marriage, his bonds extend also to their villages. Finally, he has ties with all his scattered clansmen. In short, the lack of localized patrilineages prevents the compartmental segmentation of the society along conjunctive lines of kinship and territory.

571 575 619

Integration was furthered also by such groups as the *Muchachu enyen* society, the men's ceremonial group known as the *Bis li enyen* (Mothers of the Tapir), and the *Dürek li enyen* (Mothers of the Arrow), an organization to which all Mundurucú warriors belonged.

121

The thesis that contradictory modes of descent and residence are conducive to multicommunity, or tribal, integration is not new; Fred Eggan reached the same conclusion when weighing evidence that a similar organization existed among the Gros Ventre Indians.[1] And as early as 1917, A. L. Kroeber stated, with reference to the Zuni, the more general principle that the presence in a society of a number of social groups with overlapping membership results in "segmentations which produce an almost marvelous complexity, but can never break the national entity apart."[2] From the viewpoints of logic and empirical data,

[1] Eggan, 1937, p. 34.
[2] Kroeber, 1917, p. 183.

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

this is a valid statement. But it conveys the impression 12.1
that such integration is sufficient to social cohesion; actually interpenetrating modes of segmentation may make social adjustment a most delicate matter.

When considering the relation between structural integration and social solidarity, it may be well to keep in mind that life in society requires a degree of personal renunciation as a means of securing the corporate well-being. Conflicts in interest, between individuals or groups, are bound to follow in all human societies. The causes and intensity of conflict and the means by which it is resolved are, however, variables of the structure of the particular society. The open expression of hostility, we learn from the sociologist Georg Simmel,[5] may result in a readjustment of relations between groups that produces a measure of stability; the playing out of conflicts can thus promote the integration of a society through the correction of disbalances in power and by the cathartic release of aggression.[6] According to Meyer Fortes, battles between lineal groups in Tallensi society has just this effect.[7] But the Tallensi are significantly different from the Mundurucú. Both are patrilineal, but the former society has local groups based on patrilocal residence; conflict between kin groups is simultaneously conflict between local groups.

Conflict in Mundurucú society, on the other hand, cannot range along such simple segmental lines. The memberships of lineal groups and local groups do not coincide; in a conflict, people cannot align themselves with clan fellows, for this may well pit them against the members of

[5] Simmel, 1955.

[6] The latter corollary to Simmel's thesis has been more fully developed by Lewis Coser (1956).

[7] Fortes, 1945, pp. 240-244. See also Gluckman (1956) for a penetrating analysis of segmentary opposition and the part played by cross-cutting loyalties in the dampening of bend.

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

571 578 629 the same men's house, or even the same household. Correspondingly, if a man is to side with his co-residents, he may find himself arrayed against his patrilineal kinsmen in another household or village. Munduruc men have two primary sets of bonds, one based on co-residence and the other on patrilineal kinship. Since the persons affected in each set are generally not the same, the individual is placed in potential role conflict, if sides are to be chosen. To choose the tie of kinship may disrupt the village and household and their economies; to give primary loyalty to one's co-residents can destroy clanship.

There can be no balance of antagonisms in Munduruc society; conflict can only destroy both social solidarity and social integration. Hostility is, for this reason, suppressed. Intervillage conflicts are unheard of, as are those between kin groups. And interpersonal grievances remain latent between individuals not only because of the disruptive effect of an open breach, but because the antagonists cannot expect uniform support from either kinsmen or co-residents. Covert factionalism may be rife among the Munduruc, but open feud is impossible within their social system.

578 There are few means to express the aggression arising from the frustrations of normal social life. Real grievances, such as those arising from sexual rivalries or from the institution of chieftainship, do not result in direct retaliation against the objects of hostility. Aggression is instead buried and later displaced on surrogates. During the nineteenth century, the Munduruc were able to use warfare as a displacement device and as a rallying point for social cohesion. The only acceptable means of purging latent hostility today is the projection of generalized antago- [683] nisms to the shamans and their execution as sorcerers.

Although matrilocality is no longer as rigidly adhered

12: Murphy R-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

to as in the past, the conflicting modes of segmentation noted above still largely apply. And, correspondingly, aggression is repressed and the highest degree of harmony and coöperation is enjoined on the members of the society. The even and calm tonality of interpersonal relationships is most evident in the village, but it extends also to all men of the tribe. The men are unaggressive and uncompetitive; it is difficult to elicit relative prestige rankings from Mundurucú informants and practically impossible to learn of the overt hostilities that occasionally occur. The observer receives the initial impression of enormous cohesion, but prolonged residence in any community reveals severe grievances and smoldering factionalism. Despite these tendencies, the savannah Mundurucú do not fight among themselves, and they maintain the external appearance of solidarity and coöperation. But the society is extremely vulnerable to factionalism and hostility; social cohesion is precarious, and disaffection is an important motive for emigration from the savannah villages.

Today, this communality is primarily operative on the level of village organization; coöperative endeavors among several communities are largely defunct. Warfare and the ceremonial cycle have lapsed, and intervillage relations are structured by personal ties of kinship and not by the interdependency of villages as groups. Tribalism has further decayed as a consequence of the migration to the shores of the Cururú River and the alienation of the latter residents. But clan, language, and much of the traditional culture remain to maintain the boundaries between "people" and "foreigners."

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Certain features of Mundurucú religious belief and activity are of particular relevance to the economy and social

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

monly entangled in sorcery cases, either as accused or accusers, reflects the strains in the political system. Reduced village size contributes to the disruptive effects of sorcery accusations, for even if a man has only a few defenders, this may constitute a significant bloc within the community under current circumstances.

One result of witch killings has been a decrease in the number of shamans. This not only includes people who were actually executed, but also those who escaped or who left for fear of future accusation. Given the inevitability of disease and death and the Mundurucú belief that sorcerers are the responsible agents, the position of the shamans is very insecure. There had been no sorcery killings in Cabruá for several years, as of the time of our stay, but illnesses and deaths had occurred. The step son of the chief was being effectively protected by his family, leaving two other shamans open to accusation. One decided to move to his rubber-avenue home on the Tropas River, and the other immediately followed suit rather than be faced with the unhappy prospect of being the only available scapegoat. Cabruá was then left without a practicing shaman, and the community was deprived of one of the services that village life traditionally afforded.

Changes in Mundurucú religion show a close relationship to economic and social shifts. Aspects of belief and practice that promoted and affirmed the well-being and values of the society at large and which were best staged by a unified social group have disappeared. What remains are essentially practices that are defensive against prevailing fears and anxieties and which are highly individualistic in practice. A circular process is at work here. The decline of group ceremonial not only reflects the weakening of Mundurucú social structure, but it has aided in its debilitation. Fellow clan members are no longer united by

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

regular intervillage festivals, and this has contributed to the weakening of the bonds of descent. Villages pursue a far more isolated existence than they did in former times, and extravillage ties no longer bind the individual so closely to life in the savannahs. Within the villages, the disruptions caused by sorcery and leadership combine with increasing participation in trade relations to disturb the equilibrium of community life.

THE STRUCTURE OF MUNDURUCÚ-BRAZILIAN RELATIONS

The economic and social adjustments made by the Munduruú to the collection and trade of wild rubber can be described by using the residents of Cabruá as illustration. The trade relations of the villagers have been briefly mentioned in the discussion of chieftainship, and it has been pointed out that the villagers disperse annually to tap rubber on both the Tropas and Cabitutú rivers. Those who collect on the latter stream generally deal with the trader in the hamlet of Sao Cinza, but occasionally make transactions with itinerant peddlers. The chief of Cabruá maintains his rubber-season dwelling on the Cabitutú at a place known as Cachoeirinha. With him live two other men, one of whom is his son-in-law, and two adolescent boys of his family, who also have rubber avenues. One of his sons and another man maintain a separate residence not far from that of the chief, and a stepson taps rubber near the mouth of the Cabitutú. The chief is considered the representative in trade of all but one of the dry-season residents of the Cabitutú, and these "clients" gather at his house when the trader is expected.

Several residents of Cabruá collect rubber on the Tropas River. Most are customers of a trader at Caroçal on the Tapajós River, who maintains a branch store and agent on

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Munduruco SQ13

particular patrons. Two or three decades ago, all seven-teen communities were much alike and, except for differing places of dry-season residence, the populations of all maintained frequent contact through intermarriage, visiting, and joint participation in ceremonies. The cultural and social differentiation of Cururú and savannah dweller is thus quite recent.

There are two major points of difference between the migration to the Cururú and that to the more northerly rivers. First, in the former large numbers of people moved in a comparatively short period. Secondly, the patrons on the Cururú River were not Brazilian rubber traders, but a group of German Catholic missionaries who were deliberately attempting to attract the population and modify their culture. The missionaries achieved little success during their first ten to fifteen years of activity and attracted large numbers of Indians only after the price of rubber rose. On the other hand, the astuteness of this example of applied anthropology should be given recognition, for the missionaries offered high rubber prices and low-cost merchandise, and thereby accelerated the migration process.

THE NATURE OF THE MIGRATION

The population move to the Cururú occurred in piecemeal fashion, for, as in the contemporary savannahs, nuclear families or segments of extended families shifted and not whole villages. Co-resident groups of Indians who commonly collected rubber and fished on the banks of the Cururú during the dry season were lured into setting up permanent residences there by the attraction of trade goods and the persuasion of the missionaries, who sought thereby to bring the Indians more directly under their influence. Other rubber-season residents perceived the economic advantages of all-year occupation of the Cururú,